



Churches Together in Harbourough Minutes of the Forum Meeting on Thursday 7 January 2021 at 7.00 pm via Zoom

Attendees:

Janet Smith	Rose Williams	Andy Murphy	Derek Williams
Angela Zemlak	Andy Giles	Dave Tomlin	Quentin Appleton
Maureen Douglas	Elizabeth Tubb	Chris Davies	Dee Quinn
Alison Iliffe	Ceriann Kelly	James Pickersgill	Keith Rugg
Jill Mann	Christopher O'Connell	David Nixon	Barry Hill
Dawn O'Connell	Mandy Gays		

Welcome and Opening Devotions:

Janet welcomed everyone to the Forum meeting, especially Ceriann Kelly the new Youth Work Manager at the CUBE. She then read a message from the new CEO at Torch, Tim Jeffery, who was confirmed in post recently - He sent this message: "I look forward to engaging with you and other Christian leaders in Harbourough in the months and years ahead. Please pass my greetings to the meeting this evening and assure folk of Torch's continuing desire to play our part as one bit of the body of Christ in Market Harbourough."

Andy Murphy led the devotions saying:

As we go into another full lockdown and we see the news regarding events in America where there is a group thinking that the only democracy is where they win, there was a good news story that shows that all American police officers aren't bad.

A US police officer who was called out to arrest a family suspected of shoplifting because two women were reported not to be scanning all of their groceries. When questioned, the family said they had fallen upon hard times and could not afford to pay for all the food but they had still wanted to give the children a Christmas dinner. He then bought them gift cards worth \$250 (£180) with his own money which was close to the cost of what would have been taken. He showed empathy to the family.

Andy suggested that we need to show empathy during this time and put ourselves in others shoes; acting with compassion can bring us together and Christmas and Epiphany are the seasons we can do this. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus (Matthew 7:12) 'in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you' today we can say, 'in everything, think of others'

Andy then led the meeting in a time of prayer

1. Apologies for Absence:

Stephen Haward, Jeff Bonser, Liz Mills, Teresa Kendrick

2. Minutes of Forum 12 November 2020

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and Janet signed them

3. Matters Arising

Lenten resources 2021 – Ministers' response

From the Ministers' meeting the recommendation was that they had a sense of needing to respond to our own churches in 2021 and so the 2021 CTH ecumenical groups should move to 2022

Appeal for Refugee Family

£1,900 has been raised to date. The family are very grateful for this support. Janet and Andy M had visited with some of the amount raised before Christmas and are taking best advice about the best way to give to not impact other support. Andy was overwhelmed by the response and will continue to find out the family's needs before accepting offers of material goods.

Main Business

4. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 18th – 25th January 2021

Ecumenical Prayer meetings

- a) Derek had been doing some work on arranging ZOOM prayer sessions. He had Leaders for Monday to Fridays mostly lunchtimes but some evenings. There had been no offers for Saturday. Some are happy to host but should have enough volunteers to host.
- b) Topics are suggested by CT England but Derek wants requests (by the end 10 January) for topics about local Churches or Church groups. communications@harboroughchurches.org.uk
- c) Information about sessions and links will be sent out next week. A discussion took place on password and risks involved in promoting to the public. Janet and Derek will meet to discuss options

United Service

- a) A discussion took place on whether we want a united service on morning of 24th January by Zoom or consider prayer walking, either on our own or with one other person. Some churches will still hold Sunday morning services so an afternoon service might have to be an alternative.
- b) At the Minister's meeting it had been decided not to plan but wait until January and felt that we should all be gentle on ourselves and congregations with only a simple gathering. Whatever was decided, it was agreed we will put posters outside churches about what we will be doing
- c) Janet and Derek will meet to discuss options.
- d) Derek asked that members sent in prayer requests. It was important that we share with each other.

5. The Homeless/Asking for Help Project

- a) Andy Giles had visited some new potential food outlets to see if they would come on board with vouchers
- b) Nick at Cod and Scallops are producing £5 vouchers which CTH have purchased. This would provide a fish cake and chips or something similar with a non-alcoholic drink. Andy has some to hand out so contact Andy if you want to have a supply.
- c) Greggs had offered £5 vouchers for CTH to buy but anyone could buy vouchers to hand out. The Foodbank will pay to purchase vouchers for their use.
- d) Apart from donations or individual purchases, CTH funds will cover the costs of the vouchers
- e) Janet and Andy G are attending a meeting with HDC and other charities on 19 January to discuss what action we can collectively take to help the homeless in the Harborough District.
At 8.00 pm the meeting stopped for a time of prayer and quiet whilst people were clapping on the doorstep for those affected by the pandemic
- f) The Thanksgiving service for the life of John Tebbutt is being streamed at 2.30 pm on Monday 11 January

6. Report of Recent events: Christmas 2020

- a) Nativity Trail - Sam Peverett had not had any feedback but Sam had been pleased that all churches had participated. There was a possibility of producing a similar event for Easter
- b) Christmas greetings video on the CTH website had been very well received being viewed over 750 times. Andy M was thanked for preparing this

- c) Andy was also thanked for preparing the video for Father Owen

7. Communications

The local media, Harborough Mail and HfM were both very supportive of CTH and churches. CTH is continuing with articles in the Harborough Mail. Rose was thanked for sending all the information from the Executive out. Derek asked that Reps ensure that the information gets forwarded to the Church leadership and members.

8. Brief Headlines from our organisations

Bower House - Maureen presented the report from Philippa and Trish

- a) It was with regret that in discussion with the Bower House Chair of the Governing Body it was decided to remain closed after our Christmas and New Year break. We considered this decision to be cautionary, but after three days the climate in the country had changed and the decision became critical.
- b) But good news to share is that more of our Bower House counsellors have trained, and are in the process of training, to move their practice online. This is a financial cost to them, and we are grateful for the commitment shown to the Bower House and the clients. Also, as we returned to face to face work in August and with Health and Safety measures in place we were able to keep open until 18th December, this means that when we are able to re-open we have all procedures in place to make this a speedy return to normal service. We hope this is soon.
- c) The step taken to reopen in August also resulted in managing our lengthy waiting list and all who had been waited many months for therapy were allocated in those few months of re-opening. The consequences of this has meant that our current waiting list is manageable and remains open so that those who wish to access therapy can phone during lockdown and we can process that request and do assessments ready for when we re-open.
- d) So, while the Bower House as a building is closed the work we are doing remains active.
- e) We would like to thank the Churches Together in Harborough for their continued prayers for the Bower House.

Foodbank – Janet presented the report from Liz Mills, who was congratulated on her MBE

A thank you from the Foodbank

- a) We have had so much support this year from individuals, churches, organisations and businesses. Our store is full, and we have absolutely no urgent need for food, as the Christmas donations were vast.
- b) We have supported more households than ever in 2021; around 400 and the Harborough community has helped that to happen.
- c) Every time I thought that there was an insurmountable problem, God showed a path. This usually involved another group's support such as HDC, VASL or a local organisation.
- d) The committee and volunteers are looking forward to 2021 and any changes we will need to make. Please pray for guidance in our decisions.

CUBE- Dawn reported that Julie is retiring, and they are adverting for an Administrator, 20 hours per week. The job is being advertised through Christian networks. Prayers are needed for the funding bids from Children in Need and the National Lottery. They have received funding from the Council and building society for a gazebo which will be used for outside working.

The 1st Aid course has been postponed.

Ceriann Kelly introduced herself to the meeting. She had started as Youth Work Manager at the CUBE four days ago. She had been volunteering in Churches from 16 and has previously been a Children, Youth and Families worker for eight churches prior to coming to the CUBE

Street Pastors – Mandy reported that they were still not going out but there was a possibility of helping with COVID testing. She noted that John Tebbutt will be missed. The family have asked that donations in memory of John will be given to Street Pastors

Church planting - Barry reported that Rob Leveritt would be leading a church plant on the new Airfield housing development. A Vicarage was being purchased; there were known Christians who were living or planning to move to the new housing.

9. Coming Events: Peace Vigil on Friday 8th January, 5.00 – 5.30 p.m.

As we cannot meet on the square as in previous years, we are encouraged to light a candle and place in a window. There has been a piece in the Harborough Mail regarding this event and here is the link to some suggestions for prayer.

[2021-01-08-peace-vigil.pdf \(harboroughchurches.org.uk\)](https://www.harboroughchurches.org.uk/2021-01-08-peace-vigil.pdf)

10. Supporting one another during the pandemic

Current lockdown, churches are making their own decisions which is right and proper

- a) Baptist – not meeting in-person – BU sent out guidelines to support, mixture of on-line and recorded
 - b) Methodist – similar to Baptist
 - c) OLOV – continuing with masses, with good stewarding, 3 weekend masses and in November were open for private prayer
 - d) Anglican – trying to keep one church open – a lot of services are going on line
- Hothorpe Hall has gone into administration. There are 30 potential job losses. Prayers requested

11. Any other Business

National Day of Prayer: Maureen and Keith Douglas had written to Boris Johnson asking him to agree to a National Day of Prayer – She asked if we would also consider doing the same

Naseby Square: Dave Tomlin told the meeting that there is likely to be a planning meeting in February. Given that the ruling group is overwhelming it is likely that the scheme will go forward. Dave has been in touch with County Councillors (both sides) in the hope that some pressure can be put on Council

12. Dates for future Forum Meetings:

Monday 1st March - ZOOM

Thursday 20 May 2021 – AGM

Monday 6 September 2021

Thursday 18 November 2021

Janet thanked the Churches and Organisations Representatives for attending, thanked Angela for taking the minutes and thanked James for organising and hosting the Zoom meeting

Janet closed the meeting with everyone saying the Grace together